LEVEL ONE

# News Sheet of the American Branch of the Anglican Society

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## SOME LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

II.

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## THE HOLY LITURGY — I.

A suitable prelude to the Holy Eucharist on festivals is a Procession, not a processional hymn in the too commonly accepted sense, sung while the choir, servers and clergy are entering, but a real Procession, starting from the sanctuary and choir, after all have quietly entered the chancel. A hymn is started and the officiating clergy of the Eucnarist should lead, following after the crucifer and other servers. If there are still other clergy present they would follow at the rear after the choir. After encircling the congregation and coming down the center of the nave, a station may be made before the rood or entrance to the choir, while the celebrant says or sings a Collect commemorating Redemption through the Cross, such as the Annunciation or Good Friday Collect. The hymn is then resumed or another one is sung while the procession enters the chancel. A final station is made before the Altar and in the Choir while another Collect is said or sung appropriate to the festival.

In penitential seasons, and on ordinary Sundays if desired, the Litany is the appropriate Procession, and is constructed for this purpose, having for the station at the rood the portion beginning "Son of God we beseech Thee to hear us" and on through the Lord's Prayer and the prayer following taken bythe celebrant. During the entrance into the chancel the antiphon "O Lord arise" etc. is sung and the petitions following, and for the final station before the Altar the closing Versicle and Response and prayer "We hunmbly beseech Thee O Father" etc.

The Litany of course may precede the Eucharist said or sung without going in procession. On ordinary Sundays if the Litany is not used, after the choir and non-officiating clergy have entered quietly, a hymn may be sung as an Introit while the servers and officiating clergy enter to the altar. Better still a proper Introit consisting of a verse of Holy Scripture, a Psalm verse and Gloria may be sung. The rubric also allows an anthem which in this place should be very short.

Here it is well to consider the Propers of the Mass so called, in distinction from the Ordinary or fixed parts of the Liturgy. The Propers in addition to the Collect, Epistle and Gospel (and the Proper Preface on festivals) are the Introit, Gradual and Alleluia (or Tract in Lent) Offertory and Communion for any given day.

For long the Prayer Book has provided for an Introit in the direction "Hymns and Anthems" under "Service of the Church," likewise for an Offertorium in one of the rubrics at the Offertory, and for a Communion Hymn after the Prayer of Consecration and since the last revision after the Prayer of Humble Access. The revision of 1928 now allows a Gradual between the Epistle and Gospel. At all these four places the rubrics designate a hymn and at three of them a hymn or anthem, not mentioning an anthem in the rubric after the Prayer of Humble Access. However, a hymn

need not be in rhyming verse, but in blank verse or prose, as is clearly shown in the rubrics of Morning and Evening Prayer which designate Te Deum, Benedictus, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis as hymns. Hence it is quite permissable to use the traditional Introits, Graduals, Alleluias, Sequences, Tracts, Offertoriums, and Communions which are made up of words of Holy Scripture, of the Hymnal, and of the Book of Common Prayer, and thereby restore the use of Psalmody so long lost from our Liturgy, and add much to the service by way of teaching and enrichment according to the day or season of the Christian year.

A collection of Introits, Graduals, etc., for the Christian year set to simple plainsong melodies has been published recently in England by Francis Burgess, entitled, "The English Gradual" (Part II.) and may be obtained from the Plainchant Pub. Com., 50 Woodville Road, London N. W. 11.

The repetition of these melodies set to different words Sunday after Sunday soon makes them familiar to choir and people, easily sung, and much to be preferred to solos and anthems sung by indifferent singers, or too pretentious for ordinary choirs. For special days like Thanksgiving and Independence Day not provided for in the English publication, it is a simple matter to choose Psalm and other Scripture verses and set them to the melodies or simply to use them at Eucharists without music. Also if the words of the traditional Propers for any day are not pleasing to modern ears as when verses from the imprecatory Psalms are appointed other verses can easily be substituted.

The note under "Concerning the Service of the Church" says, "That in the directions for the Special Services in this Book, it is not intended, by the use of any particular word denoting utterance, to prescribe the the tone or manner of their recitation." Hence it is quite permissable for the priest to recite the Introit, Gradual and Alleluia, Offertorium and Communions at a so called "Low Celebration" of the Holy Communion, or whenever it is not convenient to have these Propers sung. There is also no reason why an opening hymn should not precede the Proper Introit if desired, and a Sequence Hymn follow the Gradual and Alleluia (on festivals), an Offertory Hymn after the Offertorium and a Communion Hymn after the Agnus Dei and Communion. Of course one or more of the Offertory sentences appointed in the Prayer Book must be read by the priest before the Proper Offertorium is sung or read. The latter, especially on festivals, adds a scripture reference appropriate to the day, and offsets the financial aspect rather prominent in many of the Offertory Sentences.

It is well to fix on certain of the Offertory Sentences for use on festivals, other days and at the different seasons of the Church year. For example for Advent, "Lay not up for yourselves"; at Christmastide, "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus"; for the Epiphany season and Ember Days, "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed"; for pre-Lent, "He that soweth little"; for Lent, "To do good and to distribute forget not"; for Easter and Ascension-tides, and Trinity Sunday, "Thine O Lord is the greatness"; for Whitsun week, "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord"; for Trinity season, "The King shall answer"; or "Whoso hath this world's good," or "God is not unrighteous"; for Harvest and Thanksgiving, "Ye shall not appear before the Lord empty"; for requiems, "While we have time."

It is important for the people to understand the structure of the Holy Liturgy as to its four main divisions: 1. The Preparation of Prayer, Instruction and Praise; 2. The Offertory and Intercession; 3. The Anaphora or Consecration; 4. The Communion and Thanksgiving.

In the Preparation under the head of Propers, the Collects, Epistles and Gospels present some problems. The Tables of Pre-

cedence and most of the rubrics concerning these Propers are clear as to what to use and how, when Festival, Greater Sundays, Sundays in Octaves, and other days such as Ash Wednesday coincide with ordinary Sundays or other Holy Days. A rubric directs the Collect of All Saints' Day to be said daily throughout the Octave. The question arises whether the Epistle and Gospel also may be used. Strictly speaking probably not, but as All Saints is now provided with a real Octave including the use of a Proper Preface throughout, it would seem both desirable and allowable to use the Epistle and Gospel also. This is especially desirable on the Sunday in the Octave when it is likely many would be present who could not come on All Saints' Day itself. It cannot be convincingly argued that the Sunday in the Octave of the Epiphany is a like case, because the Gospel for that Sunday is in natural sequence of the events of the life of Christ and fits in here much more appropriately with the season than the Gospel of any Sunday after Trinity falling in the Octave of All Saints' would fit in on that Sunday. However, it would be highly desirable in a future revision to direct this use throughout the Octave of All Saints', also to move ahead the Collects, Epistles and Gospels of the Sundays after Epiphany, so that those of the Feast of the Epiphany would be used on the Sunday in its Octave because here again many cannot be present on the feast itself and so do not ever hear the Epistle and the Story of the Wise Men read as a Liturgical Epistle and Gospel.

At a future revision the Epistle and Gospel for several Sundays in the year might well be dropped for some more happy selections, especially for one or more of the Sundays in Advent, Lent and Trinity-tide. When some inspired poet appears among our liturgical scholars who has learned the exacting art of writing a Collect, some of our present Collects might be dropped also for new ones more distinctive of the day or season, or less relative to adversity and more incisive as to Christian being and action. For example those of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays in Lent could be of a more seasonable nature, and Passion Sunday especially needs a Collect suitable for the beginning of Passiontide.

In a future revision it is also to be hoped that certain Saints' Days will be added to the Kalendar as Red Letter Days with Collects, Epistles and Gospels appointed, notably the Visitation B.V.M., July 2; St. Mary Magdalene, July 22; the Beheading of St. John Baptist, Aug. 29; the Nativity B.V.M., Sept. 8. Our Lord's blessed Mother has no day in the Kalendar distinctively hers. Both the Annunciation and Purification are equally feasts of her Incarnate Son. St. Joseph also is worthy of commemoration. There is ample edifying scripture of "news value" for liturgical Gospels for these days, for which suitable Epistles could be found and Collects written.

The common Collect, Epistle and Gospel for a Saint's Day cover fairly well such Black Letter Saint's Days as we may desire to observe, but it would be a helpful enrichment if special Collects were provided for the greater worthies like St. Augustine of Hippo, and St. Francis of Assissi, or like the English Revision of 1928 to provide Commons for Martyrs, Doctors, Confessors, Virgins and Virgin Martyrs.

The English Revision of 1928 also provides Collects, Epistles and Gospels for the week days of Lent, Easter week, the three Rogation Days, the days of Whitsun week, All Souls' Day, Nov. 2, and for Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Baptism and for the Institution of the Holy Communion, all of which many American Church people would like to have in our Prayer Book.

Unless or until these liturgical blessings are bestowed by General Convention we may have recourse to what seems to be a loop-hole in the second paragraph under, "Concerning the Service of the Church," which says "for other special occasions for which no Service or Prayer is provided in this Book, the Bishop may set forth such form or forms as he shall see fit, in which case none other

shall be used." The inference is that if the Bishop does not exercise his "jus liturgicum" and set forth forms for such special occasions as noted above, or any others, then the minister may use some other form or forms at his discretion. There is material in abundance for all the occasions and commemorations mentioned above, in the English Revision of 1928, and in several missals published here and in England which have drawn material from traditional sources.

If there are deacon and subdeacon, or Epistoler and Gospellar, assisting the celebrant, even where services are kept very simple in ceremonial, it is not only an old tradition but adds interest to the service and is helpful to the congregation for the reader of the Epistle to advance to the choir steps to read, and the reader of the Gospel to go to the pulpit, the choir steps or to a Gospel lectern in the midst of the choir to read. All the better if the latter is accompanied by servers or by taperers to hold lights on either side of him to give honor to the words of, or about Christ the Light of the world. Here it may be well to mention that at the Creed, the Offertory Sentence, the Sanctus and the Gloria in Excelsis, it adds dignity and emphasizes these four important points of the Liturgy for the Epistler and Gospellar to go up and stand at the altar with the celebrant, the Epistoler on his left and the Gospeller on his right. Even where a priest is the sole minister in Holy Orders in a parish, it is not only permissable but desirable for a properly trained layman to read the Epistle and to serve the celebrant in the accustomed duties performed by deacon and sub-deacon, or by the usual lay server.

(To be Continued)

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## NOTES BY THE EDITOR

One of the urgent reforms needed in our Church is that obedience should take the place of disobedience in the rendering of the Prayer Book services. This is a matter which has already engaged the attention of the Commission on Liturgics of the General Convention. A member of the Anglican Society last summer for a number of Sundays attended services of Morning Prayer in which only one lesson was ever read and that one never taken from the Prayer Book or the permissive Lectionary. The preacher selected his own lesson, to illustrate the sermon he preached. Had he used the regular psalms and lessons provided, and then just before he preached used as text the passage on which he wished to preach, the effect would have been good: as it was all he succeeded in doing was in practically destroying the Prayer Book character of the service—indeed the services were not Prayer Book services at all. Such a violation of the Prayer Book is thoroughly reprehensible, and also greatly disliked by many of our intelligent Church people.

And a service lately conducted in one of our large city Churches is just as reprehensible. It was the Holy Eucharist; a bishop sat in front of the altar on the Epistle side facing the people with his back to the altar; while singing was going on, the service was said or sung sotto voce; the Kyrie was sung in Greek; the Gloria in Excelsis was sung near the beginning of the service, before the Creed. It was a singularly disappointing service, utterly foreign to the Book of Common Prayer.

The Editor is glad therefore to print in this and succeeding issues the articles on "Some Liturgical Considerations." These are not part of a lecture delivered last summer at the Wellesly Conference as the Editor had supposed but are written especially for the News Sheet.

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It seemed wise to omit the Annual Meeting for 1943 in view of conditions. Instead there will be an important meeting of the Executive Committee. Dues of members for 1943 are now payable to the Treasurer.